

For immediate release

Wednesday, June 6, 2012

Mayor Coleman Appoints Gregory A. Paxton Chief of Fire

Mayor Michael B. Coleman today appointed Gregory A. Paxton to be the 23rd chief of the Columbus Division of Fire. Paxton replaces Ned Pettus, Jr. who retired earlier this year. Paxton joined the Division of Fire in March of 1981. He worked a number of different engine and ladder assignments, as well as paramedic assignments, before being promoted to lieutenant in 1988. He was again promoted in 1991 to captain, to battalion chief in 1994, to deputy chief in 2000 and to assistant chief in 2002. As an assistant chief, he served as the city's fire marshal, the chief of the training bureau, and as the executive officer, which is second in command of the Division of Fire.

"I believe we have the best firefighters in all of America, but they need strong leadership to reach their full potential," Mayor Coleman said. "I am confident Greg Paxton will provide that leadership. Chief Paxton has the experience, talents and character to be one of the best chiefs the Columbus Division of Fire has ever seen."

Chief Paxton is a lifelong citizen of Columbus who graduated from Bishop Watterson High School in 1971. He received a bachelor's degree from the Ohio State University in 1975, and a master's degree from OSU's School of Public Policy and Management in 1998. He is currently a doctoral student in OSU's Fisher College of Business and co-authored an article entitled "Aspects of Strategic Change in State Government" printed in the Encyclopedia of Public Administration and Public Policy.

"Being part of the long and distinguished history of the Division of Fire is a great honor," Chief Paxton said. "I thank Mayor Coleman and Public Safety Director Mitchell J. Brown for the trust that they have placed in me to lead our organization through the difficult financial times that lie ahead. I am committed to the themes of innovation and efficiency as the foundation of improved service at a lesser cost for the citizens of the City of Columbus."

The Columbus Division of Fire has presented Chief Paxton with a Distinguished Service Award, two Battalion Chief Commendation Awards, and a Bronze Maltese for Bravery. Chief Paxton is a member of the Charity Newsies, the Shamrock Club, and the Emerald Society. He is a former board member of Alvis House and the Boys and Girls Club. He is currently a board member for the Columbus Urban League.

Mayor Coleman made his selection in consultation with Director Brown and the Columbus Fire Chief Nominating Committee, chaired by Barbara McGrath, former director of the Columbus Civil Service Commission. Joining McGrath on the committee were Trudy Bartley, assistant vice president of outreach and engagement for the Ohio State University, and Tom Horan, CEO of the Columbus Neighborhood Health Center.